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COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Intergovernmental Forum on Forests
Second session
Geneva, 24 August-4 September 1998
Item 1 of the provisional agenda

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

2. Promoting and facilitating the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests:

   (a) Promoting and facilitating implementation;

   (b) Monitoring progress in implementation.

3. Matters left pending and other issues arising from the programme elements of the IPF process:

   (a) Matters left pending on the need for financial resources;

   (b) Matters left pending on trade and environment;

   (c) Matters left pending on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to support sustainable forest management;

   (d) Other issues arising from the programme elements of the IPF process needing further clarification;

   (e) Forest-related work of international and regional organizations.

4. International arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

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5. Other matters.

6. Provisional agenda for the third session of the Forum.

7. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its second session.

Annotations

Item 1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Rule 7 of the rules of procedure of the functional commission of the Economic and Social Council provides that the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests shall, at the beginning of each session, adopt the agenda for that session on the basis of the provisional agenda.

At its first session, the Forum stressed the need for a focused and balanced approach to its work in relation to the mandate contained in the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, which was adopted by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session (resolution S/19-2) and reconfirmed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1997/65. The Forum emphasized the need to build on the positive results achieved by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and that the focus should be on implementation of the proposals for action and on those issues on which international consensus had yet to be achieved. In the light of these considerations, the Forum decided that the work of its forthcoming sessions should be conducted according to three interlinked categories (see items 2, 3 and 4 of the provisional agenda), which should receive balanced intergovernmental attention.

Following the guidance as regards modalities of work provided by the Commission on Sustainable Development in its decision establishing the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, which was approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1995/226, intergovernmental organizations and the full range of non-governmental organizations and other groups may participate as observers in the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests on an open-ended and fully participatory basis, in accordance with the rules of procedure and practice of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

The Intergovernmental Forum on Forests will draw, inter alia, on the resources and technical expertise of the informal, high-level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests and other appropriate organizations within and outside the United Nations system, as well as secretariats of relevant conventions, with appropriate contributions from non-governmental organizations. The Forum encouraged inputs from major groups in all the activities in its programme of work.

Considering the complexities of the topics included in its mandate and in view of the fruitful contributions made by a large number of government-sponsored initiatives in support of the IPF process, the Forum welcomed any

proposals made by Governments to organize expert meetings or to conduct studies in support of the Forum's work and welcomed regional approaches in particular.

Also at its first session the Forum agreed on the need to establish in-session working groups, on the understanding that no more than two working groups would meet simultaneously. The membership of the Forum is given in the annex below.

Item 2. Promoting and facilitating the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests (category I):

(a) Promoting and facilitating implementation

(b) Monitoring progress in implementation

Under sub-item (a), which is for substantive discussion, the Forum will consider the launching of programmes by countries, United Nations organizations, other international organizations and major groups to implement all proposals for action developed by IPF and will also consider appropriate mechanisms for the mobilization of financial resources, institutional and human resources and capacity-building, with particular attention to the role of women.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on programme element I.a: promoting and facilitating the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/2)

Under sub-item (b), which is for background discussion, the Forum will consider the mechanisms, process and format for reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress and will assess progress in implementation, inter alia, by countries, United Nations organizations, other international organizations and major groups, including the private sector, and indigenous people, forest dwellers, forest owners and local communities.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat on programme element I.b: monitoring progress in the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/6)

Item 3. Matters left pending and other issues arising from the programme elements of the IPF process (category II):

(a) Matters left pending on the need for financial resources

(b) Matters left pending on trade and environment

(c) Matters left pending on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to support sustainable forest management

(d) Other issues arising from the programme elements of the IPF process needing further clarification

(e) Forest-related work of international and regional organizations

Under sub-item (a), which is for background discussion, the Forum will consider the following options for action, as contained in paragraph 68 of the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests on its fourth session (E/CN.17/1997/12):

(i) To urge the establishment of an international fund to support activities for sustainable forest management;

(ii) To pursue action to enhance funding in other ways, inter alia, by inviting the United Nations Development Programme and the Bretton Woods institutions, together with other relevant international organizations, to explore innovative ways both to use existing financial mechanisms more effectively and to generate new and additional public and private financial resources at the domestic and international levels in order to support activities for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat on programme element II.a: matters left pending on the need for financial resources (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/7)

Under sub-item (b), which is for substantive discussion, the Forum will analyse the mutually supportive roles performed by international trade and sustainable forest management and, in that context, issues related to non-discriminatory international trade in forest products from all types of forests, including the role that tariff and non-tariff barriers may perform in relation to sustainable forest management, certification issues where relevant and improved market access, taking into account the needs of developing countries, in particular those of the least developed among them. It will also consider the question of the relationship between obligations under international agreements and national measures, including actions imposed by subnational jurisdictions, recognizing that those matters are also considered in forums whose primary competence is to address trade issues; the relative competitiveness of wood versus substitutes; valuation; and market transparency and the related issue of illegal trade in wood and non-wood forest products.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on programme element II.b: trade and environment (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/3)

Under sub-item (c), which is for substantive discussion, the Forum will examine ways of promoting, facilitating and financing access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies and corresponding know-how to developing countries on favourable terms, including concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, taking into account chapter 34 of Agenda 21[1] and paragraph 11 of the Forest Principles.[2] It will also examine appropriate mechanisms to effect such access and transfer and will consider technologies and technical knowledge, including extension services for local sustainable forest management, as well as enhanced technology development, transfer and application to improve the utilization of wood and non-wood forest products and services, with special attention to wood as an energy source and to the role of women.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on programme element II.c: transfer of environmentally sound technologies to support sustainable forest management (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/4)

Under sub-item (d), which is for background discussion, the Forum will consider, inter alia, an analysis of underlying causes, in particular international causes, including transboundary economic forces, of deforestation and forest degradation, taking into account the historical perspective and the pressures exerted on forests by other sectors, notably agriculture, in the quest for food security. It will also consider traditional forest-related knowledge, consistent with, inter alia, the terms of the Convention on Biological Diversity; valuation of forest goods and services; assessment, monitoring and rehabilitation of forest cover in environmentally critical areas; forest conservation, including conservation in protected areas; identification and definition of global and regional research priorities, taking into account national priorities; the use and application of a range of economic instruments, including tax policies and land tenure arrangements, as a means of promoting sustainable forest management; and future supply of and demand for wood and non-wood forest products and services.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat on programme element II.d (ii): valuation of forest goods and services; economic instruments, tax policies and land tenure; future supply of and demand for wood products and non-wood forest products; and rehabilitation of forest cover (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/8)

Note by the Secretariat on programme element II.d (i): underlying causes of deforestation; traditional forest-related knowledge; forest conservation and protected areas; and research priorities (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/10)

Under sub-item (e), which is for substantive discussion, the Forum will further examine the forest-related work being carried out by international and regional organizations and under existing instruments in order to identify gaps and overlaps.

Documentation

Report of the Secretary-General on programme element II.e (i): forest-related work of international and regional organizations (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/5)

Report of the Secretary-General on programme element II.e (ii): forest-related work under existing instruments (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/11)

Item 4. International arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests (category III)

Under this item, which is for background discussion, the Forum will identify elements, build a global consensus and engage in further action. The Forum should also identify the possible elements of and work towards a consensus on international arrangements and mechanisms, for example, a legally binding instrument on all types of forests. The Forum will report on its work to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighth session, in 1999. Based on that report and depending on the decision taken by the Commission at its eighth session, the Forum will engage in further action on establishing an intergovernmental negotiation process on new arrangements and mechanisms or a legally binding instrument on all types of forests.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat on international arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests (E/CN.17/IFF/1998/9)

Item 5. Other matters

Item 6. Provisional agenda for the third session of the Forum

In accordance with rule 9 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General will submit a draft provisional agenda for the forthcoming session of the Forum, indicating the documents to be submitted under each agenda item and the legislative authority for their preparation, in order to enable the Forum to consider the documents from the point of view of their contribution to the work of the Forum and their urgency and relevance in the light of the current situation.

Item 7. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its second session

By its resolution 1997/65, the Economic and Social Council, recalling its decision 1995/226, approving the establishment of an ad hoc open-ended intergovernmental panel on forests to pursue consensus and formulate coordinated proposals for action towards the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests, decided to establish, under the aegis of the Commission on Sustainable Development, an ad hoc, open-ended Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, which will report to the Commission on

Sustainable Development in 2000. The Forum is charged with promoting and facilitating the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests; reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests; and considering matters left pending as regards the programme elements of the Panel, in particular trade and environment in relation to forest products and services, transfer of technology and the need for financial resources.

Furthermore, as decided by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session, the Forum should identify the possible elements of and work towards consensus on international arrangements, for example, a legally binding instrument. The Forum will report to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighth session. Depending on the decision taken by the Commission at that session, the Forum will engage in further action on establishing an intergovernmental negotiation process on new arrangements and mechanisms or a legally binding instrument on all types of forests.

Notes

[1] Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] Ibid., annex III.

Annex

Membership of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests

(53 members; three-year term)

Algeria
Antigua and Barbuda
Belgium
Benin
Bolivia
Brazil
Bulgaria
Canada
Central African Republic
China
Colombia
Côte d'Ivoire
Czech Republic
Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Djibouti
Egypt
France
Gabon
Germany
Guyana
Hungary
India
Indonesia
Iran (Islamic Republic of)
Ireland
Japan
Mauritania
Mauritius
Mexico
Mozambique
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nicaragua
Niger
Pakistan
Panama
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Russian Federation
Saudi Arabia
Slovakia
Spain
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Sweden
Switzerland
Thailand
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
United States of America
Venezuela
Zimbabwe